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Director

County of Los Angeles DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

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May 21, 2004

To: Supervisor Don Knabe, Chairman
Supervisor Gloria Molina, Chair Pro Tem
Supervisor Yvonne Brathwaite Burke
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

From: David Sanders, Ph.D.
Director

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GROUP HOME CONTRACT UPDATE

I wanted to provide your Board with a summary of the progress toward creating a performance-based group home contract. Your staff have received a copy of the Group Home Request for Statement of Qualifications (RFSQ) and a timeline for implementation of the new contract. The most recent occurrence was a prospective contractors conference on May 13 attended by two hundred group home providers and staff. Thus far we have heard general support from providers for the switch to a performance-based contract and we anticipate that most if not all current group home providers will respond to the RFSQ. If current providers do not choose to respond we will develop an individual transition plan for each child in the provider's care.

The RFSQ includes all of the financial accountability measures built into the foster family agency (FFA) contracts. In addition we have focused on outcomes in three broad areas: safety, stability/permanency, and well being/education. This will be the first time the Department has required achievement of specific outcomes in the group home contracts and as such reflects a significant change. We anticipate that the new contract will be finalized and initiated effective September 1, 2004.

While the identification of specific outcomes in the contract is a critical first step, the Department must develop the capacity to both monitor outcomes and to authorize services based on the provider's ability to produce outcomes and the needs of each child. We will implement a centralized service authorization and monitoring function prior to the initiation of the new contract. I anticipate that there will be challenges as we develop this capacity and I will provide you with information as we move closer to implementation. As an example, additional staff training or staff development may be necessary to fully implement a service authorization function. Additional planning to assure this and other challenges don't delay implementation will be necessary.

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Finally, the process of establishing baseline outcomes for each provider will take three to six months for most of the measures following implementation of the new contract. I will provide you with updates as we establish baseline outcomes and will hope to identify both areas of success and issues needing improvement.

Please contact me if you have additional questions or concerns, or your staff may contact Helen Berberian, Board and Commission Liaison, at (213) 351-5530.

DS:mdd

c: Chief Administrative Officer
County Counsel
Executive Office